

The Japanese-Siberian Situation Grave

Delicate Diplomatic Problem Facing President Wilson and Fellow Members of the Entente

By F. CUNLIFFE-OWEN.

IF President Wilson is withholding his assent to the military occupation of Russian Manchuria and of eastern Siberia by Japan it does not necessarily mean that he is opposed to the plan, but merely that he does not see the necessity of committing the United States to becoming a party to an enterprise which does not come within the scope of his declaration of the aims and principles of the American Government and nation in the present war. It may be assumed that he feels that if he gave his formal approval it would be equivalent to a delegation to the Mikado to act in behalf of the United States on the continent of Asia and a consequent assumption of responsibility for the policies there of Japan.

The President is said to consider that if the American Government accepts responsibility for the entry of Japanese troops into Russian Manchuria and Siberia for purposes of military occupation it also takes upon itself the responsibility for bringing about the withdrawal of the Japanese forces from Muscovite territory when the reason for their presence, namely, the danger of Teuton aggression, has ceased to exist. Now that, it must be admitted, is a heavy burden to shoulder.

Impossible to Set a Limit.

The experience of the past has shown repeatedly that it is well nigh impossible to set a limit upon military occupation, and that the latter by force of circumstances beyond the control of the occupying Power is apt to develop into more or less of a permanency. A notable illustration of this is the case of the British occupation of Egypt, which Gladstone, who inaugurated it as Premier in 1882, was anxious to limit to from six weeks to at the most six months, giving assurances to that effect to the foreign Powers, but which has continued ever since, that is to say for six and thirty years.

That the occupation of Russia's possessions in eastern Asia by Japan at the present time is not merely an advantage but even an urgent necessity it is difficult to deny. We must face the issue squarely.

Are Manchuria and Siberia to be abandoned entirely and completely to the Germans, who would take advantage thereof to secure political and above all economic control of China with all her rich markets? German control and possession, as we know by the experience of the past, would mean the exclusion of all foreign nations excepting those bound to the Kaiser by ties of political and economic alliance. Moreover, Teuton possession and domination would exercise a barbarous, degrading and demoralizing influence upon eastern Asia, diametrically opposed to all those principles of liberty, democracy, justice and right in behalf of which the Powers of the Entente have spent their blood and their treasure in such profusion in the present war.

Would Mean the Open Door.

Japan's occupation of Russia in Asia, on the other hand, no matter how long it lasted, would mean the open door and equal rights there for everybody and everything American. We are assured of that by treaty, and Japan, with whom principles of honor are a matter of that religious creed embodied in the eloquent word Bushido, has a lofty sense of the sacred nature of treaty obligations. Unlike Germany, for whom treaties are mere scraps of paper, Japan has never yet failed the world in this respect, and the United States may confidently look for a square deal at her hands.

Moreover, the cause of Western civilization, of enlightenment, progress, justice and liberty is far more likely to be served by the presence of Japan in Russian Asia than by that of the Kaiser's Huns. Incidentally it may be recalled that some twenty years ago Emperor William held up Japan to the obloquy and apprehension of the Western civilized world as the Oriental Peril, proclaiming himself, alike in speech and in allegorical sketches of



Count Terauchi, Japan's Manchurian specialist.

his own designing, as the savior of Europe and of civilization from this dread menace. It is assuredly an irony of fate that the great Western Powers, representing all that is best in civilization, should now look to Japan to protect that civilization in Asia against the savage barbarism of Emperor William, the tyrant of the Huns.

That there is a certain amount of actual opposition in America to Japan's occupation of Russian Asia must be allowed. It comes from two sources. It emanates in the first place from those who have always insisted upon regarding Japan as an enemy to the United States with designs on American territory and independence.

They are the people who have even gone to the length, in good faith possibly, but acting under erroneous ideas, of circulating throughout this country film plays showing the United States in the throes of an invasion by Japan. Now, admitting merely for the sake of argument that the Japanese were a menace to the United States and that the danger of a Japanese invasion of America, with or without Mexican cooperation, really existed, would it not be of advantage to divert the attention and the military interests of Japan from the United States to Russia in Asia?

We have been told that if Japan had designs upon America it was because she needed an outlet for her surplus population, her births exceeding her deaths by nearly a million each year. Russian Asia is sparsely populated. It is possessed of vast latent wealth awaiting development and exploitation by intelligent and progressive industry. Russian Asia could absorb and turn to good account Japan's surplus population for hundreds of years to come to the advantage of the entire world, and at the same time would furnish such wholly absorbing occupation to the lieges of the Mikado as to leave them no leisure for the consideration of their alleged designs upon the United States.

The other objection raised against Japan's occupation of Russian territory in Asia is of a still more extraordinary character and emanates from those misguided people who have undertaken to champion the cause of the Bolsheviks and who urge that President Wilson should hasten to recognize and support them as representatives "of the most democratic Government in Europe." These admirers of the Bolsheviks express the fear that Japan's occupation of Russia in Asia might distress, disturb and embarrass the Bolsheviks.

That the latter should find any people,

save anarchists of the most fiery order, willing to avow themselves their friends and defenders is surprising. Yet we see old Lord Sheffield, one of the heads of the historic house of Stanley, voicing their cause in the House of Lords at Westminster, and men equally clever, but I would add equally wrongheaded, speaking and writing in their behalf here in America. One can only explain this by the relative ignorance that prevails of what has really been taking place in Russia during the last year.

It does not seem to be understood, either in America or in England, that there have been more men, women and children murdered in the present Russian revolution during the last six months than in all the years of the Reign of Terror in France. The horrors of the French Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century pale beside those of the revolution in Russia now in progress. The latter have been far worse and more varied.

In the revolt of the Baltic fleet the Admiral and most of the officers were thrust down holes in the ice after being subjected to the most excruciating tortures. A General had his hands cut off, and after being carried round the town was hacked to pieces in the presence of his wife and little children. Another General was stoned to death in his carriage in the streets of Moscow, and another one literally torn to fragments by the mob in the suburbs of the old metropolis.

Officers, helpless civilians, landed proprietors, have been murdered by wholesale under circumstances of indescribable atrocity; banks have been looted, debts repudiated, foreign property seized and confiscated, houses and shops plundered of their contents, churches and cathedrals desecrated and looted, monasteries and convents defiled, lands appropriated, the owners massacred, their castles and manor houses burned to the ground or blown up. The foreign envoys at Petrograd have been subjected to every indignity, robbed of their possessions and of their archives, some of them even thrown into prison, and finally, as a climax, the Bolshevik leaders, now definitely proved to have been all along in the pay of the Kaiser, have betrayed their entire country into the hands of the Germans, decreeing the demobilization of the army and opening the way for the advance of the Kaiser's troops upon Petrograd, Moscow and Kiev.

All the arms, all the supplies furnished by the United States and the Allies have been turned over by the Bolsheviks almost intact to our foes, the Germans, and the Bolsheviks have never lost any occasion

Enormous Wealth in Sparsely Settled Country Only Awaiting Intelligent Development

of expressing in the most unmeasured terms their bitter hatred of the United States as the land above all others of "that arrogant and tyrannical capital" which they execrate more than anything else in the world. It is interesting to add that many of the Bolshevik leaders have lived for years together in New York and are either irresponsible fanatics of the type of Berkman, now doing time at Atlanta, or of New York East Side gunmen, who have been attracted back to Russia by the idea of emancipation from all control, of complete freedom for all their basest and most wicked instincts and by the possibilities of unrestricted loot.

The fact that they have betrayed Russia to the Germans will never be forgotten or forgiven by the bulk of the people, who may be relied upon to exact a terrible vengeance. For whereas the Russians have regarded the Japanese ever since the war of 1904-1905 as a very chivalrous foe, with whom it was possible to cultivate sentiments of friendship and sympathy, they have always execrated the Germans, in whom for 200 years or more they have seen oppressors and monopolists of favors and privileges withheld from them.

Peter the Great Imported Germans.

Peter the Great and his successors on the throne imported Germans by the tens of thousands for the industrial and agricultural development of the land, according to them exemption from taxation and from military service and all sorts of other rights, which contributed to render them objects of jealousy and ill will on the part of their Muscovite neighbors.

That is why there will be no real opposition on the part of the Russians to the occupation of their territory in Asia by the Japanese, whereas they may be relied upon sooner or later to rise in their wrath against the Germans, unwilling to submit in the future to a still greater tyranny at their hands than they have endured in the past.

The news that German agents and Russian Bolsheviks are already engaged in stirring up trouble in Chinese Turkestan against the Chinese Government and incidentally against the local interests of the Powers of the Entente shows that the necessity of a military occupation of Muscovite Asia by the Japanese is a matter of extreme urgency, admitting of no delay, and the Chinese Government has already indicated its appreciation of this fact by assigning an army of 20,000 men to cooperate with the Mikado's troops on the Chinese border. Unless all the American money already spent in improvements on the Trans-Siberian Railroad and the colossal quantities of American, British, French and Japanese supplies stored at Vladivostok and at other points along the Trans-Siberian line awaiting transshipment to Moscow and Petrograd are to fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks and their German associates the move by Japan into Russia's Asiatic dependencies must be made at once.

Japan in Fine Shape.

Japan is no longer hampered by the financial difficulties with which she was overwhelmed until the beginning of the present war. Her coffers, both official and private, are filled to overflowing; her armies are splendidly organized and on a war footing. She has at the head of her Government a gallant and able General, Count Terauchi, who as a veteran of the war of 1905 knows every inch of the ground over which the Mikado's army of occupation will advance.

He has his sovereign and the bulk of his fellow countrymen enthusiastically supporting him in his policy of peaceful occupation for purposes of protection against the peril of the Hun, and he has, moreover, the backing of the British Empire, which is united to Japan not by one but by several treaties, each more binding than the other, to safeguard each other's interests everywhere in Asia, even at the cost of arms. It is on the ground of those treaties that the Empire of the Rising Sun has thrown in its lot with Great Britain and with her allies in the cause of the Entente in the present war.